

## National Association of Counties Adopted Policy

### Excerpt from the American County Platform

#### **Resolution Supporting the Full and Immediate Implementation of the Transfer of Public Lands**

**Issue:** Transfer of public lands

**Adopted Policy:** NACo believes all fifty states are equal and that every state should receive everything that was promised to them in their enabling acts, including land transfers, if requested by an individual state with consultation with the affected counties.

Adopted July 22, 2013

<http://www.naco.org/legislation/Documents/American-County-Platform-and-Resolutions-2013-2014.pdf>

## Montana Association of Counties Adopted Public Lands Policy

<http://www.mtcounties.org/sites/default/files/publications/legislative/policy-booklet/2013-2015/2013-2015-maco-policy-booklet-web.pdf>

1. MACo believes the most basic principle that must be followed in all actions by state and federal agencies is early consultation, cooperation, and coordination with local county officials, as well as municipal and tribal officials, who have been elected to represent the concerns of those directly affected by public land management decisions.
2. MACo believes that environment issues must be balanced with socioeconomic issues to achieve a policy, which allows not only a high degree of environmental protection, but also pre-serves and enhances local community sustainability. County officials and their constituents are keenly aware of the historical, economic and aesthetic values of their local environment and they are certain of the need to prepare for a sustainable future to assure the viability of their communities. Therefore, it is imperative that the federal and state governments work cooperatively with county and other local governments on such policies.
3. MACo supports natural resource planning and environmental management featuring site-specific management decisions made by local decision makers, local citizenry and parties directly and personally affected by environmental land and resource management decisions on our public lands.
4. MACo believes that the maintenance of community stability and sustainability in natural resource dependent communities is important and it is a high priority of MACo. This stability entails a broad range of concerns for the economic, social, and environmental well-being of community residents whose future is linked to decisions that are made about the nation's natural resources.
5. MACo believes that while protecting ecosystems, soils, waterways, plants and animals is important, so too is the protection of humans, economies and communities from destructive environmental practices.

6. MACo believes human communities and economies deserve primary consideration when setting federal and state land policies.
7. MACo opposes any federal legislation, including cap and trade legislation, if it imposes any new tax or fee, energy cost, or other financial burden on state and local governments, employers, and households.
8. MACo strongly encourages the congressional delegation and the State Land Board to fully analyze the economic impacts on local governments with the cooperation and coordination of the affected counties before supporting any land transfers.
9. MACo believes that federal and state real property holdings should be maintained at a minimum or no-net gain level.
10. MACo believes that the solution will be in the multiple-use form that conserves and not preserves, uses but not wastes, respects but not abuses, and shares and not hoards.
11. MACo supports the efforts of counties to ensure local government participation and Congressional action in the decision-making process surrounding the creation of proposed special-use designations. We support efforts to maintain and improve existing public land roads and access points, with adequate federal or state funding appropriated for that purpose.
12. MACo opposes any state or federal agency allowing non-government organizations (NGO's) to participate in any planning or proposed plan changes without equal representation from organizations with opposing views.
13. MACo urges Congress to coordinate and cooperate with those affected county officials in decisions relating to the future designations of wilderness.
14. MACo supports the release of all Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's), which have been recommended or evaluated as not suitable for wilderness by the respective agencies and managed in accordance to the principles of the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960.
15. MACo opposes the use of the Antiquities Act to create National Monuments, and MACo supports amending the Antiquities Act to clarify its actual intent, which is to establish small, discrete monuments or memorials, and MACo supports prohibiting the further extension or establishment of national monuments except by the express authorization of congress and co-ordination with the state and local governments.
16. MACo believes in state primacy in water resources administration, management and allocation.
17. MACo opposes changing the definition in the Clean Water Restoration Act from "navigable waters" to "Waters of the U.S."
18. MACo believes that existing public land laws now provide for comprehensive and continuous oversight of the administration of mining, oil, gas, and coal industries, which are important for the economic well-being of public lands counties.

19. MACo supports the philosophy of multiple-use management, which allows diversity of activities on public lands and results in the establishment of local economies based on these principles and practices.

20. MACo supports the continued multiple use of all Montana's rivers for hydropower generation, flood control, transportation, irrigation, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat and municipal and industrial uses.

21. MACo supports the enhancement of a viable rangeland live-stock industry as an essential component of Montana's economy and is vital to affected communities.

22. MACo supports management practices that enhance forest health and sustained harvest and provide for multiple-use.

23. MACo supports the active management of noxious weeds on all county, state, federal, and tribal lands in Montana and recommends cooperative agreements and funding sources to implement said management.

24. MACo opposes legislative efforts to allow for the permanent retirement of grazing permits through the buyout of grazing by non-ranching third parties.

25. MACo Supports livestock grazing on the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge (CMR) at levels that sustains economically sound livestock operations and maintains the ecological health of the resource.

26. MACo supports the designation of bison introduced into areas of the state not currently populated by bison as domestic livestock to be managed by the Montana Department of Live-stock.

27. MACo supports requiring regulation of bison by the Mon-tana Department of Livestock to cross county lines.

28. MACo supports protecting communities, local businesses, and government from unnecessary restrictions due to listing of the Greater Sage Grouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as MACo believes that the listing of the Greater Sage Grouse has absolutely no merit.

29. MACo believes that the petitioning of species for listing or removing, and revising critical habitat can only be done by the state recognized wildlife management agency in which the native species in question exists or strong documentation that it historically existed in such state. Quantifiable recovery levels for delisting must be identified at the time of listing.

30. MACo calls for federal payments such as Secure Rural Schools (SRS), Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT), Taylor Grazing, and Refuge Revenue Sharing to counties.

31. MACo supports the full funding of the PILT program and Refuge Revenue Sharing at its yearly authorized level and believes that all federal holdings should be included in the pro-gram.

32. MACo believes that shared natural resource payments to counties from activities such as timber sales, mineral leasing, grazing, and others are absolutely vital to county and school budgets.

33. MACo strongly opposes any effort to reallocate federal land payments to schools or the State of Montana as has been pro-posed in previous state legislation.

34. MACo supports “round table” discussions between Montana’s Congressional Delegation, Montana Counties, and the National Association of Counties, to review the current PILT formula and to propose changes to the PILT formula that would benefit Montana counties in a more equitable fashion.

35. MACo supports reducing the administrative fee allowance to .1% (1/10th of one percent) or \$1,000,000, whichever is greater, for administrative costs for the Pittman – Robertson and Dingell - Johnson funds. If additional administrative fees are required by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), congressional approval would be required.